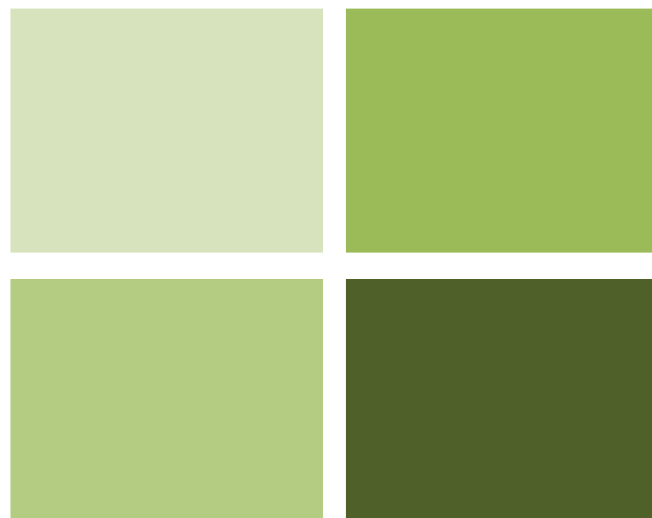


**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
*Department of*  
*Developmental Services*



# **COMMITTING TO EXCELLENCE:** *OUR VISION STORY*

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**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**  
**September 2015**

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## Terminology

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**Culture** - Organizational culture is comprised of the beliefs, attitudes and behaviors that shape how we think and act. It influences the way work is organized, executed and quality measured.

**Empowerment** – Employee empowerment occurs when management shares information and a certain degree of autonomy and responsibility for decision-making, allowing employees to take initiative and make decisions to solve problems.

**Engagement** – Employee engagement refers to the commitment of employees to the agency's vision and goals.

**Implementation Plateaus** – The strategic plan growing out of the Vision Story will prioritize and group key initiatives into multiple consecutive implementation plateaus, or, stages.

**Job Functions** – Employee job functions are a part of the expected daily/monthly/annual work for any given position. They are typically a process owned by a single person. These activities are not considered when developing agency projects and programs for the strategic plan.

**Just-in-time Training** – Just-in-time training is training provided on relevant topics just in time to be used by employees. This includes flexibility in training to respond to the ever-changing needs of the workforce.

**Lean Vision** – The DDS Vision Story is a “lean vision,” incorporating the foundational concepts of the lean process into the vision and strategic plan for the agency, in order to help us achieve our goals.

**Learning Organization** – A learning organization is one that acquires knowledge and facilitates the learning of its team members, in order to continuously improve, innovate, and transform. This creates a culture of critical thinking and continuous learning from experience, which is shared to improve future activities.

**Management Reporting** – A management reporting system allows agency leaders to monitor the progress of the agency toward goals and improved delivery of supports. This information is delivered as a byproduct of the work of employees on a daily basis.

**Networked Organization** – A networked organization encourages cross-functional teaming that allows for work to be completed most efficiently and effectively. Connections are made by the demands of the work, linking across “typical” boundaries.

**Operating Governance** – The operating governance of the agency defines the “rules of the road” to describe what is expected of employees and what they can expect from each other. These principles and practices govern the agency.

**Programs** – In the context of this strategic planning effort, programs refer to ongoing initiatives that drive the work of the agency. Separate from service delivery programs, these initiatives stretch across the entire agency, ensuring that best practices are embedded in everything we do. Programs in the DDS strategic plan include: Training and Skill Development, Continuous Process Improvement, and Performance Measurement and Management.

**Projects** – In the context of this strategic planning effort, projects refer to initiatives that can be completed once, producing results and/or recommendations for implementation. These initiatives are key in implementing best practices derived from the programs. Projects in the DDS strategic plan include: Defining Operational Governance and Developing Management Information Systems.

**Project Management Office (PMO)** – The Project Management Office (PMO) will define and maintain standards for project management within the agency. This will include producing project

management tools and providing support to project managers, as well as monitoring all programs and projects for alignment with and inclusion in the strategic plan.

**Project Team** – A project team is comprised of a small group of individuals assigned to work on a project to produce the expected results, recommendations, and/or deliverables. The team's work is facilitated by the project manager and supplemented by information from subject matter experts.

**Strategic Leadership Team** – The Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) provides leadership in agency strategy, planning, and execution. The SLT is comprised of leaders from Central Office, the regions, and Southbury Training School, and is tasked with removing roadblocks in order to support the work of the agency.

**START** - The System-wide Triage and Response Team (START) has been designed as a cross-agency escalation process for dealing with field-level crisis.

**Strategic Plan** – The agency's strategic plan defines our strategy and action plan for achieving the goals outlined in our five year plan.

**Team Leader** – Team Leaders facilitate the work of agency staff teams. In general, team leaders are the direct supervisors for team members, although this may not always be the case.

**Work Teams** – Work teams are made up of agency staff that can support each other in most efficiently and effectively completing the work of the agency.

## Questions & Answers

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**Q: *Why are we doing this now?***

A: DDS is currently operating under an ambitious five-year plan, with a mission and vision that we all work hard to honor. However, we do not currently have the tools necessary to accomplish the goals laid out in this plan. Beyond this, the current budget environment in the state demands that we identify ways to do more with less.

Our new Vision Story, the strategic plan that will follow from it, and the projects and programs that will make up the strategic plan will give us the tools we need. This initiative is helping us to determine how we can deliver on the goals outlined in our five year plan, while being mindful of diminishing resources.

These new tools will also make it easier for DDS team members and providers to do important work, leading to the best possible supports for individuals and families. The reality outlined in our Vision Story will reduce frustration, save time, improve quality, and lead to achievement of better results. We will be able to deliver high quality supports to the most individuals and families possible.

**Q: *Will this replace the current DDS Mission and Five Year Plan?***

A: No, the vision story and strategic plan is intended to support our efforts to achieve the current DDS Mission and the goals outlined in the Five Year Plan. The intent is to provide the necessary tools to achieve these goals via a series of Projects and Programs to move us towards implementing the Five Year Plan goals in support of our current Mission.

**Q: *Why are we investing in outside support to help in this transformation?***

A: In order to find all possible efficiencies, allowing us to best serve as many individuals as possible, we need the help of experts in agency-wide change management. The consultants guiding us through this process have already discovered efficiencies and process solutions for DDS. Just in this calendar year, their findings have resulted in revenue maximization through millions founds in recovered claims revenue – well in excess of cost of consulting services.

**Q: *How will the relationship between the Regions and Central Office change?***

A: The Regions have always been critical players in the delivery of supports. As a first step in this process, we have recast the Strategic Leadership Team to include the Regional Directors, as leaders of the DDS team members who do the bulk of the hands-on work with providers, individuals and families. We anticipate that this will forge a stronger connection with improved communications and information flow, not only between Central Office and the Regions, but also among the Regions themselves.

**Q: *What is one stop shopping?***

A: Another way of thinking of one stop shopping is the “no wrong door” approach. Our goal is to ensure that individuals and families can access the right supports and information through one stop, closest to where they are in the state. We will work to eliminate hand-offs, both for individuals/families and for DDS team members, so that they do not need to be passed from division to division as various questions or needs arise. Our systems will

be redesigned so that all DDS team members can access critical information in one place to most efficiently and effectively support individuals and families. This is supported by a cross-functional team/networked organization structure.

**Q: *What does a cross-functional team look like? How is it staffed?***

A: A cross-functional team is comprised of “specialists” that enable individuals to exercise the one-stop shopping approach. The team includes staff with the capacity to offer supports and/or information in many different areas, rather than being made up of team members all doing the same type of work. The details of how this will look for DDS are still being finalized, but will be shared in the coming weeks.

**Q: *How will every day work change?***

A: The goal of this process is to ease the burden on DDS team members by better coordinating work across the agency. Different areas will each be represented on the teams, giving individuals and families access to the right supports and information at their first stop. Largely, information will be stored in one place, giving team members the ability to access what they need, when they need it. Redundancies will be reduced or eliminated, so DDS team members can focus on problem-solving, rather than paperwork.

**Q: *Will the systems at DDS change to support work under the new Vision?***

A: Yes. As a first (and critical) step, we are working on the financial management environment and the stability of our data. Immediately following these steps, we already have a project in place to create an IT plan for the future. Concerns raised by current systems users are at the forefront of our considerations, as we build out the details of our IT future.

**Q: *How will DDS support and prepare team members to meet new expectations?***

A: The DDS Vision Story calls for a renewed emphasis on training and skill development. Our strategic plan will frame a program aimed at improving our abilities to deliver on our obligations. We plan to use the most advanced web-based, self-paced tools to offer just-in-time training for DDS team members. By offering training just in time to put it to good use, with flexibility to respond to the changing needs of the workforce, we are able to develop the skills of DDS team members, even with limited training dollars.

**Q: *How will reporting change in the networked organization structure?***

A: The first major project in our strategic plan will be to design team-based reporting lines to bring the networked organizational structure to life. Changes will be clearly communicated when we are ready to move forward, but, current reporting structures will remain in place for now. The exceptions to this are the senior management teams at Central Office, which have already been defined and communicated to all individuals impacted by the changes.

**Q: *Will DDS team members need to move office spaces?***

A: The focus of our new Vision Story is about getting services to individuals and families most efficiently and effectively. There may be some movement to accomplish this, but, it will be required sparingly and only as necessary. There are no plans to expand or add office locations at this time.

**Q:     *What is the timeframe for the initial changes?***

A:     The details on both expected changes and the time frame for their implementation will be contained in the Strategic Workplan which is still being developed.